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AMERICAN ART NEWS

Editor - - - PEYTON BOSWELL
 Manager - - - S. W. FRANKEL
 Advertising Manager - C. A. BENSON
 Peyton Boswell, President; S. W. Frankel, Treasurer;
 C. A. Benson, Secretary.
 Phone: Murray Hill-9403-9404.

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AN UNJUST INFERENCE

The sale by the American Art Association this week of a portrait of a man, catalogued as the work of Sir Henry Raeburn, for \$425 and the withdrawal at the same sale of a painting entitled "The Two Sisters," which was catalogued as a Sir Thomas Lawrence, because no one came forward with a bid of \$500, must not be taken by the art world either at home or abroad to mean that the value of old masters has decreased in the United States. Such an interpretation would be unjust to the art galleries of New York—all the way from Duveen's and Knoedler's down to much smaller establishments—which buy and sell genuine and desirable works by the great painters of the past.

The prices of old masters are just as high today in America as they ever were, probably higher. Their scarcity and the growing appreciation for art in this country are the controlling factors. A portrait of a man by Raeburn, of good quality and undoubted authenticity, is worth from \$20,000 to \$50,000. A decorative portrait of two women by Lawrence, of good quality and undoubted authenticity, is worth from \$30,000 to \$100,000.

The connoisseur who buys an old master of a reputable dealer takes no chance as to the authenticity of the work—it is automatically guaranteed. If the dealer should make a mistake he would be obliged to rectify it. No case is on record where a dealer has tried to evade his obligations to a connoisseur. If he tried to do so, the law would prevent him. He is not "protected" by the printing of a blanket and all-inclusive disclaimer of responsibility in a catalogue.

AN AMERICAN REPLY

The proposal of Sir Basil Thompson in a letter in the London *Times* that the English parliament pass a law forbidding the exportation of important art objects has called forth an editorial in the San Diego (Cal.) *Union* which THE AMERICAN ART NEWS is pleased to quote.

"It is neither sportsmanlike nor in consonance with a square deal to impound the art of a country under an act of parliament," says the *Union*. "If the art object is for sale it comes within the purview of any ordinary commercial transaction. The contention that rich Americans can buy this art, and that Europeans cannot bid against them is not a good argument; if the owner or the artist desires to sell he should not be enjoined by the law without adequate compensation—the government should pay him his price."

"Moreover, as far as the intrinsic value of possession is concerned, a work of art is as necessary to the culture of America as to the culture of Europe, and the chances are that America's appreciation of it would transcend that of Europe. In truth it has been asserted by competent authority that the art of the European galleries and museums is judged with a finer discrimination by American critics and connoisseurs than by the natives of the country where it was produced. The relics of Greek

One of the gems of the Snyder collection, to be sold at auction by the Anderson Galleries, New York, on March 17, is a finely characteristic example of Blakelock's Indian period, during which he painted the haunts of the red man and depicted the glories of the sunset of the golden west.

There is no doubt that Blakelock saw nature for himself, hampered by no academic procedure, and created a distinctive type and technique of landscape painting. He must always be classed as one of America's greatest artists,

art in Athens are better known abroad than at home, for the Greek of today is not the Greek of Phidias' time. The Italian art stolen by Napoleon and hung in the Louvre is in a better place from the world's point of view than it would be in Rome or Florence. This is not, of course, a justification of the original theft; but a demand by Italy at this time for the return of the loot would be regarded in the world of art as an absurdity as flagrant as the demand for the restoration of the Elgin marbles now in the British Museum.

"America needs this art that we are purchasing in Europe. * * * It should not be necessary for Americans to go to Europe to study the masterpieces of ancient art or to find competent teachers in modern art. It would be selfish and ungrateful to deprive America of all opportunity to purchase European art if it is for sale and if we have the money to buy it."

Obituary

ALGERNON GRAVES

Following close on the publication of his concluding volume of "Art Sales" comes the announcement of the death in London of Algernon Graves, a member of the family which, since the days of the eighteenth century, has been intimately connected with the world of art. For the greater part of his life a partner in the famous firm of Henry Graves & Co., in Pall Mall, he thence passed some years ago to the firm of Thomas Agnew & Sons, devoting a great portion of his time to the literary and historical side of his vocation.

His compilations, beginning with his work on "Royal Academy Exhibitors," and following with similar volumes dealing with the Society of Artists and the British Institution, were invaluable. His compiled works relating to sales and prices represent unremitting labor and research and possess a reliability and thoroughness not invariably met with in works of this nature. He leaves behind him further manuscripts relating to the less well-known art societies, which will probably be published later.

LÉON ALEXANDRE HEUZEY

M. Léon Alexandre Heuzeuy is dead in Paris at the age of 91. He was a member of the Académie, a grand officer of the Legion of Honor, honorary curator of the National Museums and formerly curator of Eastern antiquities at the Louvre. He was the author of books on Julius Caesar, on classical drapery, and on discoveries in Chaldea.

BERNARD W. EVANS

Bernard Walter Evans, landscape painter, is dead in London. He was 78 years old. He originated the City of London Society of Artists and was a member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colors. Mr. Evans represented English art at the St. Louis Exposition in 1903-1904.

Masterpiece by Blakelock to be Sold by Anderson Galleries



"THE VISION OF LIFE"

Size 21 inches by 39 inches

By RALPH ALBERT BLAKELOCK

and "The Vision of Life" is one of his greatest paintings.

"The Vision of Life," the title by which this painting is now known, was formerly called "The Ghost Dance." It is a splendid example of the artist's perception of the spiritual as related to the physical evidences of the pagan practices of the aboriginal American.

Upon the approach of twilight, in a clearing thickly carpeted with fallen leaves, surrounded by massive trees whose lace-like foliage makes a beautiful silhouette against a sky of silver and pale emerald, a band of Indians has assembled and is executing a dance in phantom-

like movements, perhaps to invoke and exorcise the spirit of a departed chief. A number of wigwams are indicated at the left distance, and the freshness of a cool October evening pervades the jewel-like canvas.

The painting was purchased direct from Mrs. Blakelock by the banker, Mr. W. S. Hurley, of New York city, who parted with it about 1911 to Messrs. Moulton & Ricketts, from whose hands it passed into the collection of Mr. Snyder. At the Blakelock exhibition in 1916 it was conceded to be one of the most important of the master's works.

—G. Frank Muller

CURRENT SHOWS IN NEW YORK GALLERIES

(Continued from Page 1)

clear brilliance of her landscape are obtained with the ease of a specialist in each field.

Her child portraits are among Mrs. Hale's most interesting work. "Nancy and the Map of Europe" is especially piquant, with its little girl in blue sitting very straight in a high-backed chair before the pink and green and blue patches of the map. "Reverie" and "Perdita" are rich in glowing flesh tones and velvety depth of color.

"The North Wind Doth Blow" and "Lavender and Old Ivory" are two interiors employing much white, and "An Old Cherry Tree" and "Rocky Hillside" have clear intensity of color and are strong in drawing. The strength underlying Mrs. Hale's workmanship is revealed in her charcoal drawings, which hold their own in interest beside the best of her oils.

Twachtman's Sanguines at Knoedler's

J. Alden Twachtman, son of John H. Twachtman, is giving one of his rare exhibitions of portraits in sanguine at Knoedler's, through March 11. Only seven studies are shown in all, but their variety of approach and treatment is sufficient to give the visitor a fairly complete summary of Mr. Twachtman's work in this particular field, which is not the one to which he devotes most of his time and effort, for he is a mural painter. Just how varied his approach and treatment of a subject is may be noted in the bust portrait of Mrs. Gordon Grant, that is markedly classical in feeling; in the head of his little son Eric, this study having the sweet austerities of a late Greek sculpture; and in the profile portrait of Mrs. Richard V. Pell, that is as modern as the mode of the moment, when that mode is graciously exquisite.

Paintings by Agnes E. Mayer

A group of paintings by Agnes E. Mayer, at the Ainslie Galleries through March 15, includes some pleasing studies of nudes adapted in decorative themes such as "Dawn" and "Moonlight," the former in tones of blue broken by pale gold, and the latter in blue alone, against which the single dancing form gleams with a pearl-like whiteness. "Youth," her largest canvas, also a nude, is full of light.

A portrait of Major Dudley has been handled very ably, and "Andrea," an Italian boy, sitting cross-legged, is painted with penetrating insight. "Tytyl" is a poetic rendering of the boy who went in search of the Bluebird, and "The Golden Dream" is most pleasing in color, with its rich yellow and gold of Oriental costume.

Cattle Paintings by Keasbey

The paintings by H. T. Keasbey, shown at the Milch Galleries, through March 11, are not only interesting as sympathetic and authoritative studies of cattle, but for their landscape backgrounds, which are decidedly more than

mere settings. "Cloud Shadows" has its interest in the grazing cattle, but without it it would still be a delightful landscape, with low green hills marked by sun and shadow.

A noticeable feature about all of these pictures is the artist's success in portraying motion, whether it is the steady swinging of cows on the way homeward in the evening or their slow browsing in the pasture. All of cows following a path that leads down a hill toward the sea is one of his most interesting compositions.

American Historical Prints

Rare and interesting early American prints including portraits, landscapes and naval battles, are on exhibition in the Kennedy Galleries through March. There is a group of portraits of Washington, some of which are in color, and of Benjamin Franklin and other celebrities of the Revolutionary and later periods. Another set is of prints by Winckler, after Troost, interiors of Revolutionary inns, and groups of officers at leisure, that are very rare and interesting as representation of the life, costumes and interior decoration of that time.

Another rare print is a "Battle of Lexington." One in color entitled "In Memory of General Washington and His Lady" is a souvenir of the sentiment of that day. Landscapes include color prints of West Point, Hell Gate, Boston, New York, Mount Vernon, Fulton Market and the Palisades, while naval prints, hand-colored, are spirited representations of the most famous engagements of the War of 1812.

Etchings by Eileen Soper

Etchings of children by Eileen Soper, at the Mussman Gallery until March 15, won distinction on their own particular merits and many who have singled out her work with surprise that she is only fifteen. There is no trace of crudity or immaturity about her work.

Most of her subjects show children at play and the motion which she puts into their flying forms, sailing by on "scooters," skipping the rope, or hurling themselves through the air at leapfrog, might well be the envy of a mature artist. Her assurance of line is equalled by its simplicity, and in composition she seems to have an instinctive feeling for emphasis.

A keen sense of observation is evident in "The Convalescent," a little girl asleep in a chair, relaxation expressed in every line, and in "The Tragedy," a little girl gazing sadly at a broken doll.

The artist's father is the English etcher George Soper.

Drawings by Albert Sterner

Thirty-three drawings by Albert Sterner, in crayon and red chalk, are on view in the Sterner's Gallery, through March 15. The artist's thorough command of his medium, his perfectly trained hand, is revealed everywhere in these pictures whether it be the superb simple portrait of Rockwell Kent, the graceful social irony entitled "Lip Stick," or the

(Continued on Page 10)